

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/535,422  
Amendment filed May 30, 2008  
Reply to OA dated March 7, 2008

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claim 1, and add new claims 18 and 19, as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A method for producing a medical device for living soft tissue having:

a melting step of producing ferritic stainless steel substantially free of Ni by melting method,

a working step of working said ferritic stainless steel to the shape of a medical device for living soft tissue to obtain a medical device body, and

a nitrogen absorption step of bringing said medical device body into contact with a gas containing nitrogen at a predetermined treatment temperature or more to make said ferritic stainless steel forming said medical device body absorb nitrogen to transform at least part of said ferritic stainless steel to austenite.

Claim 2 (Original): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 1, wherein said ferritic stainless steel has as main ingredients Fe in an amount of 50 to 90 wt%, Cr and/or Mn in amounts of 10 to 30 wt%, and Mo and/or Ti in amounts of 0 to 10 wt%.

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Claim 3 (Original): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 1, wherein said ferritic stainless steel has as main ingredients Fe in an amount of 65 to 80 wt%, Cr and/or Mn in amounts of 15 to 25 wt%, and Mo and/or Ti in amounts of 0 to 5 wt%.

Claim 4 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 1, wherein said treatment temperature is in a temperature range of 800 to 1500°C.

Claim 5 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 1, wherein said treatment temperature is in the temperature range of 1100 to 1300°C.

Claim 6 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 1, wherein said ferritic stainless steel is made to contain nitrogen in an amount of at least 0.5 wt%.

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Claim 7 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 1, wherein said ferritic stainless steel is made to contain nitrogen in an amount of at least 0.8 wt%.

Claim 8 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 1, wherein at least part of said ferritic stainless steel is transformed to austenite to form a two-phase structure of ferrite and austenite.

Claim 9 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 1, wherein all of said ferritic stainless steel is transformed to austenite.

Claim 10 (Previously presented): The medical device for living soft tissue produced by a method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 1.

Claim 11 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 2, wherein said treatment temperature is in a temperature range of 800 to 1500°C.

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Claim 12 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 2, wherein said treatment temperature is in the temperature range of 1100 to 1300°C.

Claim 13 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 2, wherein said ferritic stainless steel is made to contain nitrogen in an amount of at least 0.5 wt%.

Claim 14 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 2, wherein said ferritic stainless steel is made to contain nitrogen in an amount of at least 0.8 wt%.

Claim 15 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 2, wherein at least part of said ferritic stainless steel is transformed to austenite to form a two-phase structure of ferrite and austenite.

Claim 16 (Previously presented): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 2, wherein all of said ferritic stainless steel is transformed to austenite.

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Claim 17 (Previously presented): The medical device for living soft tissue produced by a method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 2.

Claim 18 (New): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 1, wherein the working step comprises forming a metal tube of thickness 50 to 400  $\mu\text{m}$ .

Claim 19 (New): The method of production of a medical device for living soft tissue as set forth in claim 18, wherein the metal tube is used for a stent.